



Our Home, our Country, and our Brother Man.

## STUDY THE INSECTS.

Farmers and gardeners are much annoyed and often damaged by the depredations of insects upon their crops. And yet but very few farmers and gardeners understand the natural history of even the most common insect which they often combat, and which frequently baffles all their skill in warding off its attacks.

Last winter a lecture was given by Dr. Sanborn, of Andover, Mass., on the subject of entomology before the friends of agriculture in the Representatives' Hall in Boston. He urged the necessity of more attention being paid by cultivators to the study of the habits of insects in order that they might better understand how to defend themselves against them, and save their crops from their aggressions.

The following methods of effecting this were recommended by him.

"For the diffusion of useful knowledge of insects he said that he had two plans to propose. The first was to have their pictures taken and shown up, so that all farmers and children should 'know them like a book.' He would have the most prominent ones taken in their three different stages from the egg, with that included, when practicable, with common and scientific names, and characteristics, &c., and published in a kind of text or handbook, rendered so cheap by legislative patronage as to be afforded in every farm house, so that every occupant on finding a new insect might find it there also, and know at once how to treat it.

The Doctor's next method was to have farmers preserve one specimen of all kinds of insects found on their farms during the season, and exhibit them at agricultural fairs, where competent committees should examine, label and illustrate to the assembled host of listeners each specimen, and award premiums according to merit."

We like the plan suggested by Dr. Sanborn. It would afford both amusement and practical instruction to a farmer, if he would spend a little time in collecting specimens of insects and studying their manners and customs, and such collections would make a useful exhibition at cattle shows.

## BRIMSTONE FOR CROWS.

The scare crow season is at hand. In the course of the coming thirty days what lots of images will start up in our corn fields. The human figure will be portrayed in all sorts of postures, costumes and colors,—some will be headless and some will be headless, some with coats a world too large, and some with no coats at all, and yet they will all be armed with something which will kill the crow. They may die "a la luffing" as Sam Slick says, for we can see no other way by which they can affect them in the least. In addition to the old clothes statuary which will throng the corn fields, we shall see the results of a great deal of Yankee ingenuity. Some fields will be surrounded with yarn enough to make stockings for half a dozen barefooted beggars. Some will have strips of cedar or basswood bark strung like telegraph wires from pole to pole. Poles will also be placed around on which will hang by a string, ever turning and ever twisting old bottles, old coffee pots, strips of tin and such like "paraphernalia," all of which will please the sight as well as tickle the fancy of all the crows in the neighborhood. All of them as they fly down to regale themselves with the sweet kernels at the bottom of the springing corn will no doubt look upon them as very curious but exceedingly harmless.

In addition to all these, some recommend one thing and some another. One method is to soak corn in New England rum, and lay it in the field, and thus the crows who eat it become drunk, and easily become a prey like all other drunkards to the man who furnishes the liquor. We think this is demoralizing the crows too bad. We like the method recommended by Mr. S. Mitchell, of Cameron, N. Y., who gives notice in the last number of the Genesee Farmer, that after trying all the Yankee tricks and doing the crows with rabsbane without any effect, he has found that a pound of sulphur mixed with plaster and ashes, and a handful scattered on to the corn as it peeps out of the ground, will be sufficient to protect an acre from their ravages. We presume the reason of this is that by the heat and action of the ashes, the sulphur becomes changed so as to throw out sulphurous fumes which give the crows a hint of the doom of all thieves, and they quit.

For the Maine Farmer.

**GOOSEBERRIES AND INSECTS.**  
MR. EDITOR:—I have two English gooseberry bushes, which fruit abundantly every year, not for me, but for the moth or worm that appears and destroys the entire crop, not leaving me even one specimen with which to please my palate. Now what can I do to get rid of this "gentleman at large"?  
W. S. MACCORMIE.  
Winthrop, May 4, 1887.

**NOSE.** Get some stinking whale oil and make a soap of it. This you can do by uniting it with common lye from ashes. Or you may get some carbonate of soda, (and soda as some call it,) dissolve it, and pass it through lime and unite the caustic liquor with the oil. Either of these will make whale oil soap. This made into soap and sprinkled freely on to the vines and on to the insects will cause them to decamp. Another mode would be to cover the bushes with a cloth, and place a skillet or other vessel under it containing burning tobacco. [Ed.]

**LAWNS.** It is of no use to anticipate the enjoyment of a good lawn, unless the soil is made deep and put in the best order. Trench it over two feet in depth, if a small plot; if it exceeds two acres, put in a subsoil or trenching plow, and let the work be done thoroughly. Nothing less will suffice. There are no half-way compromises in this matter.

## MANAGEMENT OF CATTLE MANURES.

MR. EDITOR:—May a subscriber take the liberty to make some crude remarks, and ask for some homely information touching a communication upon manures, in your issue of March 19th, signed "Country Gentleman?"

To me, the substance of the communication wants in explicitness, and leaves me at a loss to determine whether I am to understand that manure has actually obtained a proportion of more nitrogen than the food consumed accounts for. Do animals appropriate nitrogen from the atmosphere? Supposing a ton of hay to represent one, a like quantity of roots to represent two, and of grain three—will the solid and liquid matters yielded by their consumption be represented by any figure greater than six of nitrogen?

Does animal nature have, at any time, recourse directly to the atmosphere for any quantity of nitrogen necessary to existence? Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, all being in proportion in the substance consumed, can it make up any deficiency of nitrogen?

We are told that ammonia is formed while manure wastes; that vegetable life decomposes the ammonia, fixing its nitrogen, in which state this nitrogenous element enters again the animal being as one of its constituents of life, and to be again set free as ammonia. Now, is this given quantity of nitrogen found in the plant and in the animal substance, ever free in the atmosphere without its hydrogen forming ammonia? Is it identical with the nitrogen of the atmosphere? Is it a definite quantity ever floating betwixt the animal and vegetable kingdoms, distinct and separate from the great storehouse of nature's nitrogen, and nitrogen only in the animal or vegetable substance, ammonia ever when in the atmosphere, or free from those bodies?

Ammonia is a product of nature, a combination which the chemist cannot easily put together. Vegetables decompose, and their decay releases it, and have one of the elements of existence;—but is this or the nitrate the only source from which animal nature obtains nitrogen? The communication I advert to would lead to other conclusions, supported by other phenomena.

The effects of tillage are appreciated by all good husbandmen, and a good use of the plow, hoe, &c., remunerates them at harvest. Their faith is manure, plow, grub, and I will have wherewith to rejoice myself, grow. The operation and its fruits are the beginning and end of enquiry. But there is a modus operandi extending all through the life of a plant, to understand which aright would, no doubt, increase the fruits of their toil. To hack, harrow, and often apparently maltreat the tender young plant in order to increase its growth, does appear strange, yet to do such is in some way or other in accordance with its nature to grow and prosper; it brightens up after every time it is well taken to task, with a pole and hoe on end; and many a promising braid of "ruta bagas" are lost, or come to naught, by a kind hearted farmer who does not know how well they like to be just all but killed when young.

Every farmer has some notion that different manures possess, and in like quantities yield different results, and if it be possible to run wild, and outstep the bounds of discretion, upon such an all important subject, investigation, it would almost appear, does so, and the spirit searching after a cure for all bad crops, has opened a way for unprincipled speculators to fund the dollars upon the credulity of the honest farmer. If the forage I have alluded to—hay, roots and grain—are consumed by lean animals, I would not expect to find nitrogen in the manure equal to what was contained in the six tons of consumed produce. If they have thriven, I would look for this very explosive (?) element in their excreta, a glistering of gladness would be there apparent. The blood, imbued with nitrogen in due quantity, excites the brain, which excites the heels, sends them cloud hunting, and fills the whole being with frolic.

Had the feed been given to noble, sleek, well fed animals, with fire in their eyes, a spirit of independent power pervading the frame, and beauty characterizing the whole being, then, in the manure I would look for nitrogen, already supplied with this life-stirring element. His being rejected the surplus, which would be found in the manure; and, in proportion to that surplus, so is the after means of being able to produce good men and horses, able to bear and to forbear. Just look at the straw-fed horse—meagre, listless, incapable of exertion. Give him oats, which contain a much larger proportion of this blood and brain element, and see the transmutation to the thing we desire and love to look upon. Yet the premiums for stunted, ugly, unsightly horses, appear far more numerous than for the objects of beauty. Will it ever be so? Will man never learn to give nature, to minister to the instincts of his nature, and surround himself with objects which bring pleasure to his being? I hold (though this is not the time to expatiate upon it) that to understand and direct aright the nitrogen of the universe, is the first move to the end of philanthropic dreams; and to supply men and animals with that which now goes to the compounding of villainous gun-powder, would be a step in the direction of man's desires.

How very dark it is in the regions of progress, especially at the farm which supplies life and ministers to our desires. The soil of Great Britain has increased vastly in fertility, and yields products far beyond what it was wont to do. But have we any definite knowledge of the how? They plow, hoe, stir, to kill weeds and expose new soil to atmospheric influences, and break down inorganic bodies; and that green or hoed crops have contributed to the fertility of British soil is a conclusion without a rationale. Now, I have a notion of such, based upon operations similar to that alluded to in the article prompting these remarks; and, whether animals do or not appropriate nitrogen from the atmosphere, every analogy would lead us to suppose that vegetables had the power of doing so, and if my notion accords with natural phenomena, the utility of plowing, hoeing, stirring and draining soil, will be made more apparent. So, too, the benefit from well nitrogenized beyond that of other manures will be evident. Nitrogen is only one of the many elements entering into vegetables, but just in the ratio the husbandman can concentrate or combine nitrogen, so is its power or benefit to animal life.

For the Maine Farmer.

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MR. EDITOR:—Notwithstanding the great number of questions that are continually proposed from all quarters, and upon all subjects, for you to answer, I am reluctantly induced to add to their number, though I shall not embody them in a set of regular questions, but rather tell you what I want to know and hear you remark upon. I noticed that one of the questions to be asked of the competitors for premiums in the Maine State Agricultural Society was, "Have you had your soil analyzed?" Now I want to know if analyzing a soil enables the farmer to ascertain of what fertilizing property the soil contains the most, or a sufficient quantity of, and of what fertilizing property it contains the least or is destitute of, so as to direct our efforts in supplying its defects; (1.) if so, I want to know what is the most proper and economical way of having it done, and what quantity of soil is sufficient to be acted upon, and what the expense? (2.) Whether we must send it to some college where they are provided with chemical apparatus for the purpose, and if so, when they have reported to us its chemical composition, whether they are able to tell us what it most needs to make it productive? (3.) And as some farms contain almost all the varieties of soil that are found in the vicinity; would it not be as necessary to have each kind analyzed? (4.) And further, would the agricultural portion of the community receive more than its proportion of public patronage, if the State appoint and pay qualified chemists for analyzing the different soils it contains? (5.) These are the rude outlines of the subjects upon which I want information, and if you will have the goodness to comment upon them only in proportion to their importance, as if they were skillfully arranged, you will greatly oblige.

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The Muse.

THE BLUE BIRD.

The following stanza by Alex. Wilson, the Orlinologist, is too beautiful to need any apology for its inclusion at this time.

When winter's cold blasts and snows are no more,  
Green meadows and brown furrowed fields re-appearing,  
The fishermen hauling their shad to the shore,  
And cloud-cleaving geese to the lakes are a-singing;  
When the first lone butterfly flits on the wing,  
When red glows the maple, its fresh and its gleaming,  
O then comes the Blue bird, the herald of Spring,  
And with his warbling the charms of the season.

The loud piping frogs make the marshes to ring;  
The blue bird comes, and the sun is the weather,  
The blue woodlark flowers just beginning to spring,  
And sparrow and warbler are building together;  
O then your garden, ye housewife repair,  
Your walks border up, and plant at your leisure,  
The Blue-bird will show for his box such as air,  
That all your hard toil will seem truly a pleasure.

He sits through the orchard, he visits each tree,  
The red flowering pear, and the apple's sweet bloom;  
He sings up destroyers wherever they be,  
And makes the catkins that lurk in their down;  
He drags the vile grub from the corn he devours,  
The worms from the web, where they riot and writ;  
His song and his services freely are ours,  
And all that he asks is—in Summer a shelter.

The ploughman is pleased when he glances in his train;  
Now searching the furrows, now mounting to cheer him;  
The gardener delights in his sweet simple strain;  
And even on his spade to survey and to hear him.

The long lingering school boys forget they'll be chid,  
While gazing intently at the warbler before them,  
In mantle of sky-blue, and becom so red,  
That each little learner seems to adore him.

When all the gay scenes of the summer are o'er,  
And Autumn's slow enters so silent and so slow,  
And millions of warblers that charmed as before,  
Have fled in the train of the sun-seeking swallow,  
The Blue bird forsakes, yet true to his home,  
Still lingers and looks for a brighter to-morrow,  
Till forced by the horrors of Winter to roam,  
He sings his adieu in a lone note of sorrow.

While Spring's lovely scenes, serene, dew, warm,  
The green face of earth, and the pure blue of heaven,  
Or love's native music have influence to charm,  
Or sympathy's glow to our feelings are given,  
Still dare to each bloom the Blue bird shall be;  
His voice like the thrillings of hope, is a treasure;  
For through bleakest storms, if he can be seen,  
He comes to remind us of sunshine and pleasure.

The Story Teller.

THE RED-COURT FARM.

PART II.—THE INQUEST.

CHAPTER I.

The inhabitants of a somewhat primitive fishing village on the coast of England were aroused from their slumbers one morning by the news that a shocking murder had been committed in the night. Hastening down to the alleged scene, they found it was too true. The murdered man lay on a strip of beach land and was a shocking sight to look upon. He had been falling from the heights above, the jagged edges of the rock had also mangled that poor face, till not a trace of his humanity remained.

"Here comes Justice Thorncroft," cried one of the crowd, as a tall, portly, handsome man came in advancing toward them.

"What's all this hullabaloo about a murder?" cried out the Justice. "How'd ye do, Kyme? How'd ye do? How'd ye do? When Maria brought my shaving water just now, she burst into my room, her hair and mouth all awry, with a story of a man having been murdered in the night at the Half-moon. Some poor drowned fellow, I suppose, cast on the banks by the tide. What brings him so high up?"

"I wish it was drowning, and nothing worse, for that's not such an unenviable death, if it's your fate to meet it," returned Captain Copp, a retired officer in the merchant navy, whose right leg had been lost in an encounter with pirates. "It's a horrible bad murder, and nothing else; upon a friend of yours, Justice."

"A friend of mine?" was the somewhat incredulous remark of Mr. Thorncroft. "Why, good Heaven!" he added, in an accent of horror, as the crowd parted and he caught sight of the body. "My late son, Robert Hunter!"

It was indeed. The face, as we have said, was destroyed beyond possibility of recognition, but the appearance of the dress was not to be mistaken. He was buttoned up in his fur coat, and it was somewhat wrongly called, for the coat was of white cloth, and the trimmings only of fur. The hat was nowhere to be found; it never was found; but the natural supposition was, that in the fall it had rolled down to the sea, and been carried away by the tide.

Mr. Thorncroft stooped, and touched one of the cold hands, stooped to hide the tears which filled his eyes, unusual visitors to those of the Justice. "Poor, poor fellow! how could it have happened? How could he have come here?"

"He must have been shot on the heights, and the theotaur had over there's no doubt of that," said Captain Copp. "Must have been standing at the edge of the plateau."

"But what brought him on the plateau at night?" urged a spectator.

"What, indeed?" returned the captain, "I don't know. A bare, bleak place even in daylight, with as good as no expanse of sea view."

"I cannot understand this," said Justice Thorncroft. "Young Hunter took leave of us last night, and left for London. He missed the omnibus to Jutpoint, and set off to walk. One of my boys saw him on his way. What brought him back on the plateau?"

"Yes," interrupted Supervisor Kyme, who, however, with the wine and brandy he had consumed, had a very confused and imperfect recollection of the events of the previous evening, but did not choose to let people know that.

"Hunter took leave with me in the dining-room at the Red Court, and I wished him a pleasant journey. That must have been—what time, Mr. Justice?"

"Getting on for nine."

"It's odd what could have spirited him back again," exclaimed Captain Copp. "Which of your men stole him off?"

"I forget which," returned the Justice. "I heard Isaac say that one of them did. To tell you the truth, captain, I got jolly, last night, and my head's none of the clearest this morning. How do you find yours, Kyme?"

"Oh, mine's all right, sir," answered the supervisor, hastily. "A man in office is obliged to be cautious."

"Ah, there's no coming over you, Kyme," cried the Justice, with a side wink to Captain Copp.

"There's Mr. Isaac himself, a coming round the point," exclaimed a fisherman.

"I'm crowded turned aside and saw him. He was approaching with a rapid step."

"They say Hunter is murdered," he called out.

"Is he lying here, stiff and cold, Isaac, with a bullet in his head?" was the next reply of the Justice. "Shot down from the heights above."

Isaac Thorncroft stooped over him in silence. His fair complexion and rosy color, heightened by the morning air, were something bright to look upon. But he gazed at that shockingly disfigured face, a pale as the grave overpowered his face; and a shudder, which shook him from head to foot, passed through his frame.

"What brought him here—or on the plateau?" he asked. Almost the same words his father had used.

"What indeed?" repeated Mr. Thorncroft. "Did you tell me you saw him off? Or was it Richard?"

"It was Cyril. I did not see him at all after I left the dining room. But Richard, when he joined me later in the evening, said he had been—had been," repeated Isaac, having rather hesitated at this word, "saying good-by to Hunter, and that Cyril was walking part of the road with him."

"I wonder where Cyril left him," cried the Justice. "We will go up and ask him."

"What is to be done with this here, your honor?" inquired one of the fishermen, pointing to what lay there.

"It must be taken to the Mermaid," replied Mr. Thorncroft, as he walked away, followed by his son Isaac and three or four friends. "Go and tell them to prepare for it, and bring a shroud to carry it on. Don't be all the morning about it, or you will have the tide over the path."

Anything for excitement in a moment like the present. Away raced the whole lot of hearers to the Mermaid, leaving Captain Copp, who could not race, and the customs officer, who seemed in a brown study, standing over the body.

"There's more in this than meets the eye, captain," began the latter, rousing himself. "If this has not been the work of smugglers, my name's not John Kyme."

"Smugglers be shivered!" cried the seaman, who, it was pretty well suspected in the village, obtained his spirits and tobacco without any trouble to her Majesty's revenue, "there's no smugglers here, Mr. Officer. And if there were, what should they want with murdering Robert Hunter?"

"I have been on the work and watch for weeks, captain, and I know that there is smuggling carried on to a deuced pretty extent."

"We are rich enough to buy our brandy and pay duty on it, Mr. Supervisor," wistfully retorted the offended captain.

"Oh, psha! I am not looking after the paltry dabs of brandy they bring ashore. One may as well try to wash a blackamoor white, as to stop that. I look after booty of more consequence. There are cargoes of dry goods run here; foreign lace at a guinea a yard."

"My eye!" ejaculated Captain Copp in amazement, who was willing enough to hear the suspicious, now he found they did not point to anything likely to affect his comfort, "where do they run them to?"

"They run them here on the Half-moon, and they have got a hiding-place somewhere in these rocks. I could swear to it. I was telling my suspicions to this poor fellow"—looking down at the dead body—"and he offered to help me ferret out the matter. He came down with me here, examined the rocks, sounded them (he was an engineer), and appointed a further hunt for the next day. I never saw a man more interested, or eager to pounce on the offenders. But when the next day arrived, he came to me, and said he must apologise for not keeping his promise, but he preferred not to interfere further. When I pressed him for his reason, he only hummed and ha'd, and said that, being a stranger, the neighborhood might deem his doing so an impertinence. Now, captain, is my firm belief that this sudden change, and his constrained manner were caused by his having received some private hint from the smugglers themselves not to aid me in my search, and that it is nobody but they who have put it out of his power to do so."

"When?" whistled the staggered captain. "I could make more of a sinking ship than of what you say. Who are the smugglers? How did they find out he was going to interfere—unless he or you sent them word?"

"I don't know how they found it out. The affair is a mystery from beginning to end. Nobody was present at the conversation except Miss Mary Anne Thorncroft—and she cannot be suspected of holding communication with smugglers."

"This young fellow was a sweetheart of Miss Mary Anne's, eh?"

"I don't know. They seemed very intimate. I could almost swear Old Nick has to do with this smuggling business," added the supervisor, earnestly. "This day fortnight there was a dinner at the Red Court—you were there, by-the-way."

"A jolly spread the old Justice gave us, prime drink and cigars!" chimed in the sailor.

"Well—it was there, and one can't be in two places at once. That very evening they managed to run their cargo, ran it on to this identical spot, sir," cried the disconcerted officer, warming with his grievance. "Vexed enough I was; and never once have I been off the watch since. Every night I took up my station on that cursed damp plateau overhead, my stomach stretched on the ground, to keep myself cold, and just an eye cocked out over the cliff—and all to no purpose. Last night, Sunday, I went in again to dine with the hospitable Justice, and I'll be—l'll be shivered, sir, as you sometimes say, if they did not take advantage of it, and run another cargo!"

"Bliss and save my wooden leg!" uttered the captain, an aspiration he was wont to utter in moments of amazement, "it's unbelievable! How do you know they ran it?"

"I know it, and that's enough," replied Mr. Kyme, too much annoyed to stand upon politeness. "But here's the devil of the thing—how did they know I was off the watch those two particular nights? If it got wind the first night, that I should be engaged at the Red Court—though I don't believe it did, for I can keep my own counsel, and did them—it could not have got wind the second. Five minutes before I went in, there last night, I had no notion of it myself. Mr. Isaac looked into my rooms just before six, to borrow a newspaper, and would walk me off with him. I had had my chop at one o'clock, and was going to think about tea. Now how could the wretches have known last night that I was there?"

"It's of no good appealing to me, how. I never was 'cute at breaking up marvels. Once in the Pacific, there was a great big thing haunted the ship, bigger than the biggest sea serpent, and—"

"Depend upon it we have traitors in the camp," unceremoniously interrupted the supervisor, for he knew by experience that when once Captain Copp was fairly launched upon that old marvel of the Pacific Ocean, there was no stopping him. "Traitors round about us, at our very elbows and hearths, if we only knew in which direction to look for them."

"Well, I ain't one," said the captain, "so you need not look after me. A pretty figure my wooden standard would cut, running smuggled goods. Why didn't you tell this to Justice Thorncroft?"

"Because if I introduce a word about smugglers, he throws ridicule and cold water on it directly. And I did not choose to speak of it before all the fishermen who were going round, or I might defeat my chance of discovery. I can-

not suspect any of the superior people in the neighborhood. I do not know many of those Connaughts—but they don't seem like saugers either."

"The Connaughts!" roared out the captain, "as well think my nice smuggles as they! The old Connaught is bed-ridden half his time, and the son has got his eye trained on books all day, learning to be a parson."

"That's true," grumbled the officer. "All I know is, I can't fathom it, worry over it as I will."

"Here comes the plank," interrupted the captain. "I shan't stop to see that moved; so good morning to ye."

Meanwhile Mr. Thorncroft, and those who accompanied him, ascended through the village to the heights, and reached his residence, the Red Court Farm. At the substantial breakfast table sat Richard Thorncroft, the eldest son. But he had not yet begun to eat; he was meditating; and letting the things grow cold before him.

"Is Cyril up yet?" inquired Mr. Thorncroft. Richard took after his watch. "Sure not to be. It is only half past eight. Cyril never leaves his room before nine."

"Have you heard the news, Richard?"

"Yes," was Richard's laconic answer.

"What do you think of it? How do you suppose it could have happened?"

"I don't think about it," returned Richard. "I conclude that if he did not shoot himself, he must have got into some quarrelling fray. He drank enough wine last evening to heat his brain, and we had proof that he was fond of meddling in what did not concern him. The extraordinary part of the business is, what brought him back on the plateau, after he had once started on his journey."

"I'll go up and arouse Cyril, and know where he's at. Gentlemen, if you will sit down and take some breakfast, we shall be glad of your company. That's a capital round of beef. Hallo, you wretches!" he called out to the Justice, in the direction of the kitchen, "some of you come in here and attend. Sinnett, let some of that ham and eggs be sent in."

Nothing loth, they sat down, whilst Mr. Thorncroft ascended to Cyril's bed-chamber. Presently his voice was heard on the landing. "Hay! hi! Cyril! Are you anywhere about the house? Cyril!"

His voice died away in the echoes of the large house, but there was no answer. Mr. Thorncroft walked forward and knocked at his daughter's bed room.

"What do you want, papa?" responded a faint voice from within.

"I want you, Mary Anne. Open the door."

He was not immediately obeyed.

"Open the door, I say," cried the impatient old gentleman, shaking his handle with his strong hand. "What girl! are you afraid of me?"

Miss Thorncroft slowly opened the door, and presented herself. A fine girl, tall and fair, with the well formed features of her brother Isaac. She was in a handsome silk dress, but its flounces looked tumbled, as if she had lain down in it, and her hair was rough and disarranged. It was the gown she had worn the previous evening, and she looked almost as if she had done nothing to herself since she had gone up-stairs to bed. The sign caught her father's eye, and he spoke in astonishment.

"Why—what in the world, girl? You have never undressed yourself! Surely you did not put too much respect to the wine, as we did?"

"You know better than that, sir. I was very tired, and threw myself on the bed when I came up; I suppose sleep overtook me. Do not allude to it, papa, down stairs, I will soon change my dress."

"Sleeping in your clothes does not seem to agree with you, Mary Anne; you look as if you had swallowed a doctor's shop. Do you know anything of Cyril? That's what I wanted to ask you of his power to do so."

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that woman I disclosed to you what had happened to Hunter?"

"No," was the reply.

"Did I tell you that anything had happened to him?"

"No, papa, you did not."

"Do you hear what Miss Thorncroft says?" continued the magistrate, turning to the servant. "I advise you not to presume to contradict me again. If the house were in less excitement, you should come in before them all, and beg my pardon."

A ghastly look of fear had started to the features of Miss Thorncroft. "I—I heard them talking of it outside," she murmured, looking at Sinnett.

The woman arranged the waiter by the side of Miss Thorncroft, and went down stairs rummaging. "She could not have heard anything outside; her windows look on to the side garden, and nobody has had the key of it this morning. What is it all?"

That same dreadful mystery existed, something that would not bear the light of day, and in which Miss Thorncroft was in some way mixed up, she felt certain. And, woman like, she spoke out her thoughts too freely.

When the party down stairs had concluded their breakfast, which they did not spare, in spite of the sight presented to their eyes this morning, writing to the coroner. The day wore on, and no Cyril appeared. He was not at the Mermaid; he seemed not to be anywhere else; nobody had seen him since the previous night when he started to walk a little way with Robert Hunter.

"Richard," observed the Justice, to the eldest son, "I don't like this absence of your brother's. It is making me uneasy."

"No occasion for that," returned Richard. "I dare say he will make his appearance by night, all right. Sir," he added, abruptly, "this affair of Hunter's must be kept dark."

"Keep dark! When a man's good murdered one can't keep it dark. What do you mean Dick?"

"I mean, keep as dark as the legal proceedings will allow. Don't make more stir in it, sir, than is absolutely necessary. Hush it up as much as you can. You'll be at the coroner's right hand. It is essential advice, father."

"What the deuce!" burst forth the magistrate starting at his son; "you do not fear Cyril the murderer of Hunter?"

"No, thank God!" fervently answered Richard. "But don't you see, sir—too minute inquiries may set them on the track of something else that was done on the Half-moon last night, and it would not do. That confounded Kyme has got his eyes and ears open enough, as it is."

"By George! there's something in that," deliberated the old gentleman. "My sympathy for Hunter put me out of my mind. All right, Dicky, now I have the cue."

CHAPTER II.

The coroner's inquest on the body of Robert Hunter was held on the Wednesday. It took place in the club room of the Mermaid, the corner taking his seat at the head of its long table covered with green baize, while the jury ranged themselves round it. Justice Thorncroft being seated at the right hand of the coroner. The witnesses principally consisted of Mr. Thorncroft's family, Supervisor Kyme, who had found the body, and the surgeon who had examined it. Strange to say, numerous had been delivered to Miss Thorncroft, and to the niece and maid servant of Captain Copp; a fact which had got spread abroad, and was exciting the most intense curiosity in the village.

The supervisor and doctor were first examined. Then Justice Thorncroft. The latter spoke to the fact of the young man's having been his guest for the previous fortnight, at the Red Court; that he had intended to leave on Sunday night, by the half-past eight omnibus for Jutpoint, to catch the train, but had missed it. He then said he would walk, he wished them good-by, and left with that intention. He knew no more. Isaac Thorncroft deposed to the same; as did Richard, with this addition: That he had said farewell to Hunter outside the Red Court, when the latter was starting for Jutpoint, and that he saw him depart with his brother Cyril, who said he would see him a few yards on his way.

Call Cyril Thorncroft, said the coroner.

The calling Cyril Thorncroft was a mere form, and the coroner had been made aware that it would be so. More singular still to relate, he had not been at home since that hour, to the perplexity of his family and astonishment of the village. His mysterious absence had given rise to an unpleasant suspicion, more implied than expressed, for none liked to give voice to it, that Cyril Thorncroft had been the guilty man, and had flown from the consequences.

Call Sarah Ford, said the coroner.

Sarah Ford appeared, and Captain Copp struck his wooden leg heavily on the floor of the room, for the captain was indignant that any women-folk belonging to him should be compelled to give public evidence on a murder. The evidence proceeded, in spite of the captain.

"You are a servant in the family of Captain Copp?"

"Servant of all work," responded Sarah Ford. "How long have you lived there?"

"Going on of two years. After that, I lived in London."

"Do you not want to know where you lived before. Do you recollect last Sunday night?"

"What should all me," returned Sarah, who was a clever woman in her vocation, but possessed a sharp and ready tongue, "I ain't so far back."

"Where did you go to that night, late in the evening?"

"I went nowhere but to Justice Thorncroft's."

"For what purpose did you go there?"

"To fetch Miss Anne. She was to have come home at eight o'clock, and when it went on almost to the stroke of nine and she did not come, missis and master told me to go for her."

"Which did you?"

"Which I did, and without stopping to put anything on. Just as I turned off the waste land, on the Red Court path, I met young Mr. Hunter and young Cyril Thorncroft."

"Walking together, toward the village?" interposed the coroner.

"Walking so, sir, way."

"Did they seem angry with each other?"

"No, sir, they were talking pleasantly. Mr. Cyril was saying to the other that if he stopped out, he would be at Jutpoint at half-past ten. That was before they came close, but the air was clear, and brought out the sound of their voices."

"Did they speak to you?"

"I spoke to them. I asked Mr. Hunter if he had lost the omnibus, for, you must understand, Miss Anne had told me in the morning that he was going by it—and he said, yes, he had, and had got to tramp it. So I wished him a good journey."

"Was that all?"

"All that he said. Mr. Cyril asked me was I going to the Court, and I said yes, to fetch Miss Anne, and that master was in a tantrum with her for stopping out so late, and with Miss Thorncroft for keeping her. With that they went their way and I went mine."

"After that, you reached the Red Court?"

"Of course I reached it, and went into the kitchen, where they gave me some mullied wine, while Miss Anne was getting ready. When she

came into the hall, Miss Thorncroft, in a sort of freak (I didn't think she meant it) said she would come out with her. Miss Anne asked her how she would get back again, and she answered, laughing, that she'd run back to be sure, nobody was about to see her. Well, she clapped on her garden bonnet, which hung there, and a shawl, and we came away, all three of us. As we got close to the plateau, by the waste land, they were somewhat before me, and I saw 'em both stop and stare on to it, as if they 'em something; and I wished they'd just stare at our home instead, for I weren't over warm, a lagging there. Presently, on 'em says, 'Sarah, just look, is not that Robert Hunter up there, a walking about?' 'My eye is too chilled to see so far, young ladies,' says I; 'what should I bring Robert Hunter there, when I met him as I came along, a speeding on his journey to Jutpoint?' 'I can see that it is Robert Hunter,' returns Miss Thorncroft; 'I can see him quite distinct on that high ground against the sky.' And with that they run up and frighten him. Precious crew I was, and I took off my apron, and threw it over my head, shawl fashion, thinking what a fool I was to come out on a cold night without—"

"Confine yourself to the evidence," sternly interrupted the coroner.

"Well," proceeded Sarah, who was as cool and equable before the coroner and jury as she would have been in her own kitchen. "I doubled my apron over my head, and down I sat on the red stone, which rises out of the ground there, like a low milestone. In a minute or two, somebody comes running on to the plateau, as if following the young ladies—"

"From what direction, witness?"

"He came from that of the Red Court."

"Did you recognise him?"

"No, I didn't try to. I saw it was a man through the slit in my apron. He was going fast, but stealthily, hardly letting his shoes touch the ground, as if he was up to no good. And I wasn't sorry to see him go there, for, thinks I, he'll hurry back my young ladies."

"Witness—pay attention—were there no signs by which you could recognize that man? How was he dressed. As a gentleman—as a sailor—as a—"

"As a gentleman for all I saw to the contrary," replied the witness, unceremoniously interrupting the coroner's question. "If I had known he was going on the plateau to murder young Mr. Hunter, you may be sure I'd have looked at him enough."

"What sized man was he? Tall or short?"

"Very tall."

"Taller than—Mr. Cyril Thorncroft, for instance?"

"A great deal taller."

"You are sure of this?"

"I am sure and certain. Why else should I say so?"

"Go on with your evidence."

"A minute or two afterward, I heard a gun go off behind me, as I was sitting with my back to the plateau—"

"Did that startle you?"

"No. I ain't nervous. If I had thought it was let go off the plateau, it might have bothered me, because of the two young ladies being there; but I believed it was only from some passing vessel."

"It is singular you should have thought so lightly of it. It is not common to hear a gun fired on a Sunday night."

"You'd find it common enough if you lived here, sir. What with rabbit and other game shooters, and signals from boats, it is nothing, in this neighborhood, to hear a gun go off, and it's what nobody pays any attention to."

"Therefore you did not?"

"Therefore I did not. And the apron I had got muffled over my ears made the sound appear further off than it really was. But, close upon the noise, came an awful yell, and then a shrill scream, as if from a woman. That startled me, if you like, and I jumped up, threw off my apron, and looked on to the plateau. I couldn't see anything; neither the man nor the young ladies; I had got nearly up to the Round Tower, that ruined wall, breast high, which is on the plateau—"

"You need not explain," said the coroner, "we know the place."

"When a man darts out from the shade of it," continued the witness, "cut across to this side of the plateau next the village, and disappeared down that dangerous steep path, which nobody after I guess, ever ventured down but in broad daylight."

"Was it the same man you saw just before, running on to the plateau?"

"Of course it was."

"By what marks did you know him again?"

"By no marks at all. I should not know the man from Adam. My own senses told me it was the same because there was no other man on the plateau."

"Your own senses will not do to speak from. Remember, witness, you are on your oath."

"Whether I am on my oath or whether I ain't I should speak the truth," was the answer of the importunate witness.

"What next?"

"I stood a looking at the man; that is, at where he disappeared; expecting he was a pitched down head foremost and getting half killed, at the pace he was going, when Miss Thorncroft appears from the Round Tower, shaking and crying and laying hold of me, a most beside herself with terror. Then I went inside the wall, and found Miss Anne had fainted dead away, and was lying on the grass."

"What account did you give of this?"

"They didn't give none to me. Miss Anne, when she came to herself, was too much shocked to do it, and Miss Thorncroft was no better. I thought they had been startled by the man; I never thought no worse; and I did not hear about the murder till the next morning. They told me not to say anything about it at home, or that they had been on to the plateau. So Miss Thorncroft ran back to the Red Court, and I took home Miss Anne."

"What else do you know about the matter?"

"I don't know any more myself. I have heard plenty."

"The witness's 'hearing' was dispensed with, and Captain Copp was called.

"What account did you give of this transaction?" demanded the coroner.

"What account did she give me?" spluttered Captain Copp, "she gave me none. This is the first time my ears have heard it. I only wish I had been behind them with a cat-o-nine-tails!" shaking his stick in a menacing manner. "I'd have taught them to go gampering on to the plateau at night, after sweethearts! I'll send my niece home to her father, and let him punish her; he's a clergyman, Mr. Coroner, a vicar of a parish, and will know how to do it. And that vile bumpo woman, Sarah, with her apron over her head, shall file out of my quarters this day: a she-pirate."

The coroner interposed. But what with Captain Copp's intractability and his real ignorance of the whole transaction, nothing satisfactory could be obtained from him, and the next witness called was his niece.

She was a lady-like, interesting girl, but gave her evidence in a state of excitement, trembling as if with terror.

Her account of their going to the plateau was the same as Sarah's. It was "done in the impulse of the moment," to "frighten," or "speak to" Robert Hunter. (A groan from Captain Copp.) That they halted for a moment at the Round Tower, and then found that a man was following them on to the plateau, so they ran inside to hide themselves.

"Who was that man?" asked the coroner.

"I don't know," was the faint reply. "I am near-sighted."

"Did you look at him?"

"We peeped out, round the wall."

"Proceed, witness, if you please."

"Then what?" said the coroner, looking searchingly at the witness, who seemed unable to continue. "You must speak up, young lady."

"Then I saw him with a pistol—and he fired it off and I was so terrified that I fainted, and remembered no more."

"A good thing if he had shot off your two figure-heads!" burst forth Captain Copp, who was immediately silenced.

"Was he tall or short, this man?"

"Tall." The young lady's agitation was increasing.

"Did you know him?" proceeded the coroner.

"Oh, no, no!" was the witness's shrieking answer, as she fell back in a violent hysterical fit.

[CONTINUED ON THIRD PAGE.]

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